

## 2. GSPS BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

Following the April 20, 2010, *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Gulf Coast State mental and behavioral health providers indicated that some in the affected population were exhibiting early signs of developing substance abuse and dependence, psychiatric disorders, suicidal risk, and domestic violence. At the time of the spill existing state and federal public health surveillance systems were insufficient to provide a full understanding of the overall mental and behavioral health impact of the spill.

In September, 2010, as part of the federal response to the oil spill, CDC entered into an intra-agency agreement with SAMHSA to conduct a telephone survey to monitor the mental and behavioral health status of the coastal population most affected by the spill. Using the existing capacity and infrastructure of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) [1], CDC's Division of Behavioral Surveillance (DBS) designed and conducted the Gulf States Population Survey (GSPS) in four Gulf States: Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana. Adults 18 years or older were included in the GSPS sample population if they resided in those four states and in one of 25<sup>†</sup> coastal counties<sup>‡</sup> that lie within 32 miles of areas closed to fishing following the oil spill.

The objective of the GSPS was to assess the need for mental and behavioral health services in the region and to inform the provision of those services.

In October, 2010, the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) granted emergency clearance to CDC to conduct the GSPS through April, 2011. CDC awarded a contract to a data collection vendor in November, 2010, and data collection began on December 15, 2010. The vendor conducted the interviews in accordance with the survey protocol and provided monthly data files to CDC.

Following the initial GSPS data collection period, CDC made changes in the survey protocol. In April, 2011, the OMB approved a new Information Collection Request

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<sup>†</sup> Includes Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties in Mississippi, Mobile and Baldwin Counties in Alabama, Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton and Okaloosa Counties in Florida and Jefferson, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Lafourche, Iberia, Vermilion, St. Mary, St. Bernard, Jefferson Davis, Assumption, Plaquemines, Calcasieu, Cameron, Terrebonne, St. Charles, and Orleans Parishes in Louisiana.

<sup>‡</sup> In Louisiana, counties are called "Parishes." In this Guide the word "County" is used.

(OMB Control #0920-0885) to allow continuation of the GSPS after the end of the emergency clearance. The new request allowed the following modifications to the survey which were implemented May, 2011: (1) addition of a Spanish version; (2) modification of one particular question regarding history of mental health medication use that had proved difficult for respondents to understand; (3) extension of the sample area to the entirety of the four States, to allow comparison of results between Gulf Coast counties and noncoastal counties; and (4) addition of cell phones to the sampling frame, which had included only landline phones.

Data collection for the GSPS ended on December 16, 2011 with 38,361 completed interviews consisting of enough information for weighting purposes.

- SAMHSA also collected data from the four Gulf States in a concurrent investigation of mental health status and service needs in the region using the annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The results of data collection efforts conducted by SAMHSA and CDC are available in the report titled *Behavioral Health in the Gulf Coast Region Following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill* and can be accessed electronically at [www.samhsa.gov/data](http://www.samhsa.gov/data).